

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1 and 3 are present in this application. By this Amendment, the specification and claims 1 and 3 have been amended, and claims 2 and 4 have been canceled. Reconsideration in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Claim 1 has been amended herein to more clearly satisfy the requirements of §112. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1 and 2 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 4,999,578 to Ohashi et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Ohashi discloses a “function inspecting system” that uses a system of traversers that convey a printed circuit board or the like to different inspection units. As recognized in the Office Action and with reference to Fig. 2 in Ohashi, the sliding traversers 31 include a slider 313 that serves to push the printed circuit boards between inspection units and belt conveyors. In contrast, the specimen conveyance holder moving system according to the claimed invention utilizes a moving mechanism that lifts a holder holding mechanism up or down and horizontally moves the holder holding mechanism between at least two belt conveyors. Claim 1 has been amended to clarify that the moving mechanism lifts up or down the holder holding mechanism and horizontally moves the holder holding mechanism between the belt conveyors. The Ohashi patent lacks any such structure, and Applicant respectfully submits that for at least this reason, the rejection is misplaced.

In addition, claim 1 recites that each of the belt conveyors includes a pair of parallel guide rails along which specimen conveyance holders are conveyed. At least two of the

ITOH
Appl. No. 10/743,414
January 27, 2006

conveyors include a holder moving section from which the guide rails are removed. This structure is also lacking in the Ohashi patent.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are thus respectfully requested.

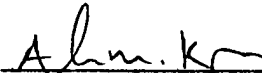
Claims 3 and 4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Ohashi in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,445,037 to Itoh et al. The Itoh patent, however, does not correct the deficiencies noted above with regard to Ohashi. That is, neither Ohashi nor Itoh provides any suggestion to modify the Ohashi structure to meet those features noted above as lacking in the Ohashi patent. As such, Applicant submits that claim 3 is allowable at least by virtue of its dependency on an allowable independent claim. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that the claims are patentable over the art of record and that the application is in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner believe that anything further is desirable in order to place the application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Prompt passage to issuance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

NIXON & VANDERHYE P.C.

By: 
Alan M. Kagen
Reg. No. 36,178

AMK:jls
901 North Glebe Road, 11th Floor
Arlington, VA 22203-1808
Telephone: (703) 816-4000
Facsimile: (703) 816-4100